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OUR LADY OF LA SALETTE.

Internal Credibility

OF

THE MIRACLE OF LA SALETTE:

OR,

INDICATIONS OF AN IDENTITY
IN THE BEAUTIFUL LADY OF THE APPARITION,
WITH MARY THE MOTHER OF JESUS.

A DISCOURSE,

ADDRESSED TO THE BIRMINGHAM CONFRATERNITY OF OUR LADY OF LA SALETTE,
ON THE OCCASION OF THE ELEVENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE APPARITION.

BY THE

REV. HENRY FORMBY,

PRIEST OF THE DIOCESE OF BIRMINGHAM.

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TO THE
RIGHT REV. W. B. ULLATHORNE, D.D.,
BISHOP OF BIRMINGHAM,
THE PRINCIPAL CHAMPION OF THE DEVOTION TO LA SALETTE,
AGAINST ITS ENGLISH ADVERSARIES,

THE ENSUING PAGES ARE INSCRIBED WITH GREAT RESPECT,

BY HIS HUMBLE AND DEVOTED SERVANT,



THE AUTHOR.

THE RIGHT OF TRANSLATION RESERVED BY THE AUTHOR.

Our Lady of La Salette.

A DISCOURSE.

Vox turturis audita est in terrâ nostrâ.—The voice of the turtle dove has been heard in our land.
—(*Cant. ii., 12.*)

TURNING over in my mind how I could possibly hope to correspond with your excellent pastor's invitation, to assist in your celebration of the eleventh anniversary of the miracle which is the foundation of your pious confraternity, I could find encouragement in no other thought than the example of the widow in the Gospel, who earned our Divine Lord's praise by casting in the little piece of coin which was her all. Never having been able to enjoy the privilege of visiting the mountain of La Salette as a pilgrim, and not having either leisure or opportunity for acquiring further information beyond that with which you have doubtless long ago been familiar, the coin which I have to offer, you will readily perceive can be but small.

Our joint pious belief I conceive to be solely founded on the authority of the canonical tribunal, which after due examination, has pronounced its judgment sanctioning the Apparition at La Salette for the pious belief of all the faithful; and the line of argument I am going to take, is not to be understood as if it sought to be supplementary to this judgment. Rather, if there should be found anything in it which results to the greater honour of the blessed Virgin Mother of God and the increase of our faith in the message of mercy, of which we believe her to be the gracious bearer at La Salette, this will afford a proof that, like her Divine Son, our Blessed Lady is pleased to notice favourably the offering of those who bring to her treasury all that they have; however small it may be.

The voice of the Heavenly turtle dove, then, as we joyfully believe, has been heard in our land. We may here fairly stop for a moment, to think of the extraordinary pains which many English people will give themselves, if by any chance they may even distantly hope to compass admission into an assembly or society which is to be graced by the presence of some lady of well-known rank and fashion. What a happiness is it not considered, to be

able to return home, having caught up though no more than the chance accents that have fallen from such a personage as Her Grace the Duchess, or Her Ladyship the Countess ! What an honour, what a treasure is not the possession of such words often esteemed ! Do not mistake me as if I were saying this in any spirit of satire or derision. Such feelings are in themselves quite natural, and where they flow from the Christian principle of giving honour to whom honour is due, they may be even laudable and are certainly entitled to respect. Our own pious belief and love for our Lady of La Salette, is itself very much founded on this natural vein of feeling. The voice of the Heavenly turtle dove has, as we believe, been heard in our land. Accents falling from the sweet voice of her who stood by the Cross of Jesus and heard his dying cry have been caught up as we believe on the mountain of La Salette, their sound hath gone forth into all lands, and at length they have found their way to our ears. Shall the world treasure up what falls from its own poor perishing titles and beauties—and shall we Christians, heirs of the world to come, not treasure up the precious words of that sweet and gracious lady, who is at one and the same time our mother and our queen ? If the curtain that hides from our view the invisible world of spirits has been graciously withdrawn, and if Mary, the Mother of God, to whom in union with her Divine Son a thousand years are but as a day, stands revealed, fresh from the human sympathies and sorrows of Calvary and fresh also from the glory and jubilee of the Assumption, can children of Mary be indifferent ? Rather let us say, Oh day of joy and delight ! oh day of happiest memory ! on which the voice of the sweet turtle dove of heaven has been heard in our land : and happy, thrice happy children of our Holy Mother the Roman Church, who have now her own authority for believing the voice from the mountain of La Salette, to have come in truth from the Queen of all saints, the chosen channel through whom flow innumerable graces to the suffering and militant church on earth.

The line of argument I am going to take, springs, as I think you will feel with me, most easily and naturally out of a very reasonable and obvious mode of looking at the facts of the Apparition of La Salette, previous to a conviction of their truth. A supernatural apparition it is currently said has been seen at La Salette by two shepherd children, a boy and a girl. The interview abounds in minute circumstances, and the dialogue in which the Lady of the Apparition is the principal speaker, is both rich in the variety and weighty in the matter of its contents. Moreover, it is also currently said that the Lady of the Apparition is the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of Jesus. Now, hereupon, a practical person naturally begins to reflect, thus : “The Blessed Virgin Mary is known to us circumstan-

tially from the narrative of the Evangelists, and to some extent figuratively too, from the writings of the Prophets," and on the other hand, enough certainly transpires in what takes place at La Salette, to convey quite a clear, distinct and well-defined idea of the character and the kind of person the Lady of the Apparition must be. Her conversation with the children is familiar, open and engaging, and she evidently has no design or intention to conceal her real character from view, or to assume any kind of disguise. The interview lasts a considerable time, and abounds in significant details. Under such circumstances then, if the Lady of the Apparition be no other than the Blessed Virgin Mary herself, it is more than natural, it is nearly akin to certainty, that some symptoms at least of identity will peep out, between the Mary whom we have learned to know in Nazareth, Bethlehem, Cana, and on Mount Calvary, and the same Mary, if it should prove to be the same, reappearing on the mountain of La Salette, and there entering into a much longer conversation with two shepherd children, than any which are recorded of her in the Gospel.

At least, I said to myself, the search after this identity, if it elicits nothing positively confirmatory of the alleged truth of the Apparition of La Salette, will lead me to study the Blessed Mary of the Evangelists more minutely than perhaps I should have done, and anyhow *this* must be a gain.

To reduce my investigation to system, I resolved to try the question of the identity under the following general heads. If the beautiful Lady of the Apparition be really Mary herself the Mother of Jesus, I may expect to find: (I.), traces of family likeness between the Apparition of La Salette, and those of the Son of Mary. (II.), I shall hope to find in the Lady of the Apparition, marks of direct personal identity with the Mary of the Evangelists, and the Mary of prophecy; and lastly, as Mary is styled by the church, Queen of the Prophets, I shall expect to find in the Lady of the Apparition, a dignity of prophetic bearing and language, quite in unison with the august character of the Queen of the Prophets, which the church assigns to her.

Proceeding to reduce my proposed investigation still further to system, I said to myself:—(I.) The Apparition of the Mother may resemble the various apparitions of the Son, in the following points:—

- 1.—In the manner in which it takes place.
- 2.—In the similarity of the effects produced.
- 3.—In the objects proposed to be accomplished.

(II.) The personal identity of the Lady of the Apparition of La Salette with the Blessed Mary, the Mother of Jesus, will be properly tested in the

same manner in which any lawyer would proceed in a case that turned on minute circumstantial evidence; and (III.) the Prophets themselves must be appealed to for proof of the identity of the Lady of the Apparition with their Queen.

With the case thus laid out before me, I went to work as you may suppose, with not a little zest and curiosity as to the result. The first general division of my inquiry, the analogy between the Mother and Son, I found, in order to make it methodical and thus to gain a surer result, required to fall again into subdivisions. Thus, on my supposition of the identity of the Lady of the Apparition with the Mother of Jesus, the Lady of La Salette might resemble her Divine Son,

(I.) as to the manner of the Apparition:—

- 1.—In suddenness of coming.
- 2.—In colloquial familiarity and concealment of her glorified state.
- 3.—In the circumstances and manner of her disappearance.

Then (II.) as to the effects produced by it:—

- 1.—In the fright occasioned at first sight, and for some time afterwards.
- 2.—In the disbelief with which the report is at first received.
- 3.—In the ill will which prompts the substitution of an impracticable counter story.
- 4.—In the slow and gradual gaining ground of the true belief.

Lastly, (III.) as to the object to be accomplished:—

In the conveying a rebuke for impenitent hardness of heart and obduracy of mind, in refusing to believe the warnings of God as conveyed by His prophets.

Of the result of the inquiries under these different heads, it is now time for you to judge for yourselves.

1. Our Divine Saviour's manner of appearing after His death was marked by the singular suddenness of His coming.

"When the disciples were gathered together, the doors being shut, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst."—(John xx., 19.) The same happened eight days later, when the unbelieving St. Thomas was of the company. "Jesus came and stood in the midst." The Lady of the Apparition was equally sudden in her coming. "*Suddenly*, without being able to guess how she came there, Maximin and Melanie saw the beautiful Lady, seated near the place where they had been taking their frugal repast."

2. The same day of our Divine Saviour's resurrection, two of His disciples, while on their way to the little village of Emmaus, fell in with a certain stranger, who accosted them, joined himself to their company, and so

interested them in the discourse he held with them as they journeyed together, that they constrained him to remain with them, although he made as if he would go from them on account of the lateness of the hour. In the breaking of bread, however, the stranger vanished from their sight, and the two disciples said, "Did not our hearts burn within us as we were on the way with him?" One of the very remarkable features of the Apparition of La Salette is the extremely similar character of the interview, as regards its colloquial ease and familiarity, and the concealment of the supernatural splendour of the state of glory. The children appear to have been quite at ease with the beautiful Lady after the first surprise was overcome, and yet unconsciously their hearts are burning within them as the Lady continues her conversation. There is evidently some secret charm at work, for Melanie says when the Lady has disappeared, "Why did we not ask the beautiful Lady to take us with her?"

3. St. Luke relates of our Lord's final leavetaking of His disciples, "that when He had said these things, while they looked on, He was raised up, and a bright cloud received Him out of their sight."—(Acts i., 9.) Maximin and Melanie relate that the Lady of the Apparition was raised up in the air, and that she disappeared slowly in the surrounding brightness, her feet being the last part of her that was seen. Maximin rushed forward to seize hold of her feet, but they had disappeared.

Next (II.) as regards the effects produced by the Apparition.

1. Our Saviour's sudden appearance in the midst of His disciples caused at first a sensation of terror. St. Luke reports our Saviour's words to have been, "Peace be to you; it is I, *fear not*." But they being troubled and frightened, continues St. Luke, supposed that they saw a spirit. And He said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do thoughts arise in your hearts; see my hands and my feet that it is I myself."—(St. Luke xxiv., 36.) At the sight of the Lady, who had now risen and had crossed her arms, says Mgr., now Cardinal, Villecourt, an extraordinary sensation of terror came upon Maximin and Melanie. Melanie in her fright let fall her Alpine staff, while Maximin told her to keep it in her hand to defend herself, if necessary, against the unknown Lady. "Fear not," said the Lady, calling the children gently to her side, "I am come to you with important tidings." Maximin and Melanie seemed suddenly to have lost their fears, and now drew near to the Lady with perfect confidence.

2. When Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary, the mother of James, and the other holy women, were come back from the sepulchre, and had brought word to the Apostles that they had seen angels, who had told them that the Lord had risen, *their words only seemed to them as idle tales*,

and they did not believe them. When the two disciples returned from Emmaus, in spite of the full circumstantial account they gave of their having actually seen and conversed with their Master, the rest refused to believe. With the decided refusal of St. Thomas to believe the unanimous testimony of all the other disciples, all of us are quite familiar. Now Maximin and Melanie met with just the same difficulty in finding belief for their story. The aged Curé at first rebukes them for their audacity, the neighbours say, "What sort of absurd tale have these children got hold of? these idle baggages must have their mouths stopped." The Mayor, M. Peytard, has them shut up in a room, and threatens to put them in prison. Still, however, they persist in their narrative and have continued to persist up to the present time.

3. The Jews who had instigated Pilate to give the sentence of death, finding the report of Jesus having been seen and spoken to to be gaining ground, bribe the soldiers to spread a counter story, to the effect that the disciples had come and stolen away the body while they were asleep at their posts. A similar enemy, finding the report of the children also to be gaining ground, has spread abroad a similar counter story, to the effect that the Apparition of the beautiful Lady of La Salette was personated by a Madlle. Lamerlière. And these two stories have this feature in common, that both are equally impracticable. Assuming the two children not to have fabricated a false story, it is clear at once that Madlle. Lamerlière would have found at least an equal difficulty in rising in the air and in disappearing from the children in the manner they narrate, as our Lord's disciples would have found, in the stealing the body of their master from under the very eyes of a guard of disciplined Roman Soldiers.

4. The belief that the beautiful Lady of La Salette is no other than Mary herself must I think be admitted, to have been ever since continually gaining ground; and I think also that we have quite sufficient evidence, that the circle of those who honour our blessed Lady of La Salette has been ever since unceasingly extending itself. This, at least, is a point of resemblance to the apparitions of the Son of Mary, which is beyond the reach of controversy.

(III.) The last general head of coincidence remains, viz., resemblance in the object sought to be accomplished by the Apparition.

An apparition is in substance a visit, attended indeed by miraculous circumstances, which, however, do not render it the less a *visit*, but only make it as such the more remarkable. When a visit is made, it has always an object of some kind in view, whether this be of a general or special nature. Our Divine Saviour had beyond doubt His own object in view in His various

apparitions after death, and the Lady of La Salette had hers also; here then, there is clearly room for the kind of evidence we are seeking, of her family resemblance to her supposed Son.

St. Mark describes our Divine Saviour as having come purposely to reprove the disciples whom he so much loved, for their hardness of heart, and to complain of their want of faith,—“At length he appeared to the eleven as they were at table, and he upbraided them with their incredulity and hardness of heart, because they did not believe them who had seen him after he was risen again.”—*Mark* xvi., 14. Now whatever else may be ambiguous and open to doubt in the Lady of La Salette, at least this much is beyond dispute, that she came upon the errand of administering a rebuke, and to complain of the great want of faith on the part of the people in whom she was so deeply interested; “Alas!” said she, “those whom I so much love disdain all my care and my affection, and make me no return for all the kind offices I am continually rendering them.”

Thus we finish our inquiry under the first head, viz., “the probable resemblance of the Mother to her Son;” and without claiming to have elicited as yet anything at all conclusive as to the identity of the beautiful Lady of the Apparition with the Mother of Jesus, I think that even in the judgment of quite a captious lawyer we are entitled to the conclusion, that hitherto the evidence has gone all one way. We now proceed to examine the identity of the Lady of the Apparition with the Blessed Mary, as she is known to us in the Gospels at Nazareth, Bethlehem, Cana of Galilee and Mount Calvary.

And here we are certainly entitled to the full benefit of the observation, that the Blessed Mary appears throughout in the narrative of the Evangelists in so extremely retiring a manner, that most lawyers would at once admit beforehand, that the chances set out with being very much against the discovery of any traces of identity, for the reason as they would say, that the case presents such scanty features of evidence as to scarcely allow of anything being made of it. On this showing then we are certainly entitled to claim, that if notwithstanding the scanty catalogue of circumstances which are characteristic of the Blessed Mary during her presence in Nazareth, Bethlehem, Cana, and on Mount Calvary, indications of personal identity appear in all four places, the result will be all the more remarkable. And this remark may be held to apply with even still greater force to such characteristics of the Blessed Mary as are to be drawn from the figurative language of prophecy; which it will be at once admitted, are far more calculated to redound to the honour of the Blessed Virgin, in the way of glowing descriptions of her glories and prerogatives, than to serve the purpose of a lawyer's inquiry, in the way of evidence of identity.

The Lady of La Salette coming to pay a visit to this earth without to our knowledge being asked to do so by any one upon earth, and for a purpose entirely her own known beforehand only to herself, stands at once in the category of those persons who have to act upon their own judgment and responsibility. Now those who act in this way are always marked and decided characters, whose mind is extremely apt to show itself in the very minutiae of their actions. We shall therefore at once look for an unmistakable clue to the real character of the Lady of the Apparition, the moment we come to know the actual mode of apparition upon which she has fixed her choice. At the time of the apparition of La Salette, there were as there are now plenty of children belonging to the Royal families, or certainly to the noble families of Europe, who would have esteemed themselves much honoured by receiving a similar miraculous visit. The Lady of La Salette however it appears passed them over every one, and chose in their place two poor unknown children, on a bare mountain side. Hence therefore, we say at once without hesitation—This lady is evidently one who does not care for great people, merely because they are great; she has not gone to their palaces and families in search of bearers for her message, and although the great people would have been highly flattered by receiving her visit, she has not cared to return the compliment to them. She lets it be unmistakably seen that she has no mind to be beholden either to them or to theirs for the accomplishment of her designs. She is one who can do perfectly well without them, and having no particular leaning to them, she simply passes them by. Now as far as we have the means of judging, the same turn of mind appears in the Blessed Mary of the Gospels. She receives with a perfect sense of her own dignity the visit of the archangel Gabriel, but she is never once heard of in the society of any of the great and titled families of her time. After the visit of the archangel Gabriel she spends three months in close retirement with her cousin Elizabeth. At Bethlehem she is told that there is no room for her in an inn, where those whom the world would have called more respectable people had been taken in and were enjoying their ease and comfort. Her Divine Son is born in a stable, and both in Egypt and in Nazareth she lives in the greatest want and obscurity. In Jerusalem we hear of her being in the house of Lazarus the beggar, and the St. John to whom Jesus commends her when He is hanging on the cross, is in a very humble and obscure way of life. In this respect, therefore, there is nothing to interfere with the possibility of an identity between herself and the Lady of La Salette.

However, let us proceed a step further and place ourselves in imagination in the grotto of Bethlehem, and there picture to ourselves the blessed

Mary, a virgin of tender years, fondling her infant Son with all the freshness of the young mother's sentiments of maternal joy and love. Suddenly the tranquillity of the grotto is invaded by the entrance of a troop of men, young and old, crying, "Where is the blessed Infant who is born, Christ the Lord?" "Where is Mary, his mother?" This troop of men come in and adore; and going away, they spread the joyful tidings of the birth of the Infant Son of Mary, their Saviour. Will the Mary of Bethlehem be likely to cease to think further of these men, who first of all the earth, long before priests, kings, doctors of the law, rulers of synagogues, expounders of the prophets cared to hear of the event that had come to pass in the grotto, presented themselves to adore her Son, to wish herself joy of His birth, and at her bidding to be the first to proclaim her beloved Son's praises? Will the Mary of Bethlehem be likely to forget that these men, the first to adore and the foremost to praise her Son, were *shepherds who kept their flocks by night on the mountains*? Now, whoever the beautiful Lady of La Salette may be, beyond doubt she has this mark of personal identity with the Mary of Bethlehem, that she also has made choice of *two little shepherds who kept their flocks by night on the mountains* to be the bearers of her message. They are mountain shepherds who first announce the "tidings of peace on earth to men of good will," to their neighbours, at the bidding of the Mary of Bethlehem; and they are also mountain shepherds who announce the message that is sent to restore forfeited peace, at the bidding of the beautiful Lady of La Salette.

A further indication of identity that I myself discover, is at least so unsuspecting that if it fail to carry any very great conviction, still there can be no harm in stating it. There is, as you are no doubt aware, now prevalent in Europe quite a cry for schools and the education of all classes of the people. Education may be said to be now at a sort of fever heat. In almost every State of Europe public men, forgetful of their armies and navies and neglecting their public diplomacies and negotiations, like Hercules among the servant maids with his spinning wheel and distaff, have turned their minds to the making of grammars and reading books for the people; and nothing will satisfy them, but the driving their generation forward into an hitherto unheard-of condition of that scholastic polish and refinement which is supposed to result from the labour of the schoolmaster. Now, when the blessed Mary lived in Nazareth, the present prevailing education fever was not known; and what she would have thought about it, if it had prevailed, we have no means of knowing. This much, however, we do know from the account of St. John, that Mary did not send her own Son to school in Nazareth, but kept him at home, had him brought up to a trade,

and gave him none but a home education, a circumstance which was afterwards turned into a reproach against him. Thus people said, "*Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary?*" (Mark vi. 3). "*How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?*" (John iii. 15). I am not here insinuating an argument that the sentiments of Mary are unfavourable to what is now called popular education; my business is simply to draw out an indication of identity between the Mary of Nazareth and the beautiful Lady of the Apparition, which I think comes out as follows:—On the supposition that the beautiful Lady in question is identical with the Mary of Nazareth, I shall expect her in her conversation with the two mountaineer shepherd children, to exhibit a most kind and motherly interest in their welfare and in their good conduct; but somehow or other I shall not expect her to ask the question—My children, do you go to school? I am not hinting that she would disapprove of their going to school; I am only saying that however natural it might be for a priest or other benefactor of the poor to ask such a question; somehow or other I shall not expect *her* to ask the question, or even to mention the subject. Now, by some means or other, this is exactly the case with the beautiful Lady of La Salette; she shows the most motherly interest in the two children, but she never mentions a word about school to either of them. She says indeed, "My children, are you very careful to say your prayers?" And when they both answered, "Not very," the Lady of the Apparition said, "Mind, my children, and say your prayers without fail morning and evening. When you have no time to say them entire, say at least the *Our Father*, and the *Hail Mary*; always remember to do this!" Now without prescribing to others what they should think, I must say, that the omission of the school and the mention of the prayers on the part of the Lady of the Apparition, strikes me as most singularly agreeable to what I should myself be prepared to expect from the Blessed Mary of Nazareth, who had her own Son brought up to a trade under her own immediate care at home.*

At Cana in Galilee, Mary showed an instance of her compassion for the distress of a poor family. She came to her Son and said, "They have no wine." And owing to Mary's intercession the first public proof that Jesus gave of His power was the miraculous gift of wine to supply the distress of the poor family. In the neighbourhood and country of La Salette, as indeed in the whole of Southern Europe, wine is the poor man's cheapest and great-

* Indeed if the Lady of the Apparition had said, "My children, do you attend school, and do you make proper progress in algebra and trigonometry? and are you diligent in learning to compare the poets?" this, I confess, would have most singularly put my own perception of identity at fault.

est luxury; it is that of which if he be deprived, he most sensibly feels the loss. Now one of the objects of the Lady of La Salette is if possible to avert a judgment by which the poor families were threatened, with the loss of their wine. A failure in the grapes immediately strikes home to the poor family in the loss of the year's provision of wine; while all that the rich families suffer is an inconvenience in the rise of the price of wine.

On Calvary Mary stood by the cross, "the mother of sorrows," "*juxta crucem lachrymosa*," consenting indeed to the death of her Son, that the world might be thereby redeemed, yet grieving for His pain and agony. "The Lady," writes Mgr., now Cardinal, Villecourt, "appeared overwhelmed with the deepest grief and when she removed her hands with which she had covered her face, she appeared to have been shedding tears in abundance."

We now proceed to the question of identity with the Mary of prophecy, and here a lawyer will probably think the case still more hopeless.

Mary the Mother of Jesus, is described in the glowing words of the prophetic Scriptures, as the created wisdom which sat by the throne of the most High and proceeded forth from His mouth. "I was with Him," says the inspired Prophet King, in words understood to be figurative of Mary, "forming all things and was delighted every day playing before him at all times, and my delight was to be with the children of men. Now therefore ye children hear me."—(*Proverbs*, viii., 30 *et seq.*) Again of the created wisdom under which the Church loves to understand a prophetic description of Mary the Mother of God, a further characteristic is added in a passage in the Book of Wisdom, where it is said, "wisdom hath opened the mouths of the dumb, and hath made the tongue of young children eloquent." (x., 21.) Now except the beautiful Lady of the Apparition had called the poor ignorant Maximin and Melanie to her side, and had said to them, "You children hear me," who in the world would have ever paid any attention to the words of either one or the other, or who would so much as even have heard of their existence? If therefore Maximin and Melanie have filled the world with their story, it is certainly owing to no other than the beautiful "Lady of La Salette," who in their case has "*opened the mouths of the dumb and made the tongues of the young children eloquent*." (*Wisdom*, x., 21.)

One more point only remains to complete our inquiry, and it is this, supposing the beautiful Lady of the Apparition to be identical with the Mary of the Litany of Loretto, this Mary is also Queen of the prophets. Is then the prophetic warning of the Lady of the Apparition in keeping with the august dignity of Queen of the prophets? The inquiry is fair and practical. Now on this point it will be proper to observe, that the inquiry will not be

as to what this or that person's judgment may be, as to what is befitting so august a character, otherwise we fall into a labyrinth of diversities of misinformed tastes and capricious notions from which there is no possible outlet or escape. To avoid such a confusion and still all the same to be able to come to an issue, it will suffice if we say, "not that the Queen of the prophets is necessarily obliged to follow in the footsteps of the prophets, but still, that if the Lady of La Salette does so, this must be taken as a proof that there is nothing which can be brought forward to the prejudice of her identity with the Queen of the prophets. For though we have no right to say how the Queen of the prophets should speak, there is certainly more to be said, in favour of a mode of speaking similar to that of the prophets, than for one at variance with them.

First then as to the mode of conveying prophetic messages by proxy. It was by no means an uncommon thing with the prophets, as several instances show, to commission others than themselves to be the bearers of their prophetic messages. Thus Ahias sent to Jeroboam the message of the approaching death of his sick child and the loss to himself of his kingdom, by the hand of his own wife; Jeremias commissions Baruch to read all the words of the roll in the ears of the people on the festival day: to which many other similar instances might be added if necessary. Next as to similarity of language. Here the words of Moses must be quoted at length and the comparison deduced. Warning his people of the evils that will come upon them if they are unfaithful to the law of their God Moses says,

"Thou shalt cast in much seed into the ground, and shalt gather little because the locust shall consume all."

"Thou shalt plant a vineyard, and shalt dig it, and shall not drink the wine, nor gather anything thereof, for it shall be wasted with worms."

"Thou shalt beget sons and daughters, and shalt not enjoy them, for they shall be led into captivity."

"The blast, also, shall consume all the trees and the fruits of the ground."—(Deut. xxviii., 38.)

The Lady of the Apparition, after complaining of the many sins of the people, which are about to draw down the vengeance of God, says to Maximin:—"If the people persist in disregarding the laws which they are bound to observe, they may sow their corn if they will, it will come to nothing; the worms and insects shall devour it in the blade, and the blight shall consume the little that falls into ear. The grapes shall rot and fall off; the nut trees shall be blasted. Then shall follow a famine, when convulsions shall seize upon the little children, and they shall die in the arms of their mothers and nurses."

Here is surely a sufficiently marked resemblance between Moses and the Lady of La Salette, to satisfy all and it may be even more than we have a right to ask for in the way of conformity to precedent, on the part of one who by the very supposition that she is the Queen of the prophets, is therefore not bound to any other conformity, than she herself judges to become her own independent dignity and position. I might have added the parallel between the Lady of Salette's gracious promises in the event of penance being done, and some very similar words of Moses, but I perceive that the subject has already run out to some considerable length.

Our inquiry, carried as it has been into no small amount of details, being thus brought to its termination, the adversary doubtless will ask us : What do you now consider yourselves to have gained, and in what do you suppose yourselves the better for all your pains ? Taking the matter at the very worst we may answer, that though we should be found to have gained nothing, as regards the beautiful Lady of La Salette, we are certainly gainers as regards the blessed Mary of the Evangelists and her Divine Son ; for at least we have been spending our time in studying them, and this must always be a gain.

However, I hope we are also not without some positive gain as regards the Lady of La Salette ; and this, in the way of stopping the mouth of the adversary, and of putting down the over-bold assertions of the adverse side. The adversary of La Salette says to us :—" Your belief in this apparition is a grand mistake—how far honest and how far roguish, is not very clear. The canonical judgment of the diocesan tribunal is not worth a rush, and your beautiful Lady is either an imposture, got up by the children themselves to take you in, or else it has itself been played off upon them, in order to make them innocent instruments in the fraud. In short, the whole thing is a regular hoax." Now in reply to such an adversary, we are not merely able to say as we could always have said from the beginning, " If you are not satisfied with the authority of the diocesan tribunal, *we are, this is sufficient for us ;*" but we can now look our opponent in the face, and say to him :—" Do you, who reject our belief, proceed to give us a satisfactory account how it comes to pass, that all the many minute circumstances on which we have consented to test the question of the identity that you are so forward to deny, issue in a result so uniformly consonant with our belief, and so uniformly at variance with your own judgment ? Either, then, proceed to explain this, or else in future hold your tongue and let us enjoy our belief in peace and quietness." To be able to meet an adversary in this way, I think you will agree with me, is some positive gain.

But, my Christian friends and fellow-members of the confraternity, that

we may not part without a word of exhortation on the duties that we have voluntarily assumed, let us remember that it is no slight or easy task, week by week, to continue to make acts of reparation for the sins and impenitence of others. You believe that our common loving Mother Mary has spoken at La Salette, and that the sweet voice of the Heavenly turtle dove has been heard in our land. Let none of us who believe, hear the accents of this sweet and gracious voice in vain,—that is to say with coldness of heart and feebleness of purpose. Let us all remember that if the Lady of La Salette was engaging, gentle and beautiful to behold, if her tears fell and her speech distilled as the dew, the Queen of Heaven is also terrible as an army in battle array; and her children and servants must not be fainthearted and feeble in her cause. Let us persevere then without being wearied in the humble task of week by week offering to Almighty Majesty our offering of prayer and reparation; and in so doing let us often love to think of the undying care of Mary for her children, who has shown herself as fresh in love and as rich in grace on the mountain of La Salette, in the year A.D. 1846, as she did on Mount Calvary, when she gave her consent that her Divine Son should die for our redemption.

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